



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **CALIFORNIA MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOLLOWING CONVICTION IN METH CONSPIRACY**

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a California man received a life sentence in federal court today following his trial conviction for participating in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

**Rufus Wright**, 36, of Bakersfield, Calif., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this afternoon to two consecutive terms of life in federal prison without parole.

On Aug. 3, 2005, **Wright** was convicted by a federal trial jury on charges contained in an Oct. 16, 2003, federal indictment. **Wright** was found guilty of participating in a conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute in excess of 50 grams of methamphetamine in Greene County, Mo., from as early as July 25, 2003 to Aug. 6, 2003. **Wright** was also found guilty of being in possession with intent to distribute in excess of 50 grams of methamphetamine in Newton County, Mo., on Aug. 6, 2003.

Co-defendant **Michael David Hankins**, 35, of the Bolivar, Mo., area, was sentenced on Aug. 5, 2005, to five years in federal prison without parole. **Hankins** pleaded guilty on Nov. 22, 2004, to his role in the meth conspiracy.

**Wright** and **Hankins** arranged for the transportation of methamphetamine from California to southwest Missouri, Graves said. **Wright** was arrested by law enforcement officers while returning to Joplin, Mo., from California, where he had traveled in order to purchase methamphetamine for re-sale in Missouri.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Kimberly R. Weber Dean. It was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Missouri State Highway Patrol and COMET (the Combined Ozarks Multi-jurisdictional Enforcement Team).

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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